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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND NEA/ELA
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2018
TAGS: PREL PGOV EG ER
SUBJECT: EGYPT NO LONGER A "SISTER" TO ERITREA

REF: ASMARA 366

Classified By: CDA Melinda Tabler-Stone for reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) An Egyptian diplomat admitted to PolOff that diplomatic relations between Eritrean and Egypt have become strained over recent months. In addition to having to endure the restrictive in-country travel policies (requiring all foreign diplomats to request in-country travel 10 days in advance), the diplomat cited Egypt's anger at the GSE's opening of three official shipments from Cairo destined for the Egyptian Embassy. The packages, one of which contained an office printer, were opened in January, April, and June of this year and were thoroughly inspected by GSE officials. Following the opening of the third package, the Egyptian MFA contacted the Eritrean Ambassador to Cairo, allegedly warning him to not contact the MFA for anything.

¶2. (C) The Egyptian Embassy has adopted a more strict entry visa policy for Eritreans, requiring security approval from Cairo before issuing the visa. The diplomat estimated that less than 30% of visa applicants have been approved since the new policy came into place. The new policy has aroused the ire of GSE officials, who stated Egypt is no longer a "sister" to Eritrea, the diplomat relayed.

¶3. (C) These events follow the July 2008 Egyptian trade fair (reftel), in which the GSE took 22 of the 42 shipping containers full of merchandise as Egypt's "payment" for being allowed to host the fair.

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